

Friday Morning Club  
938-40 South Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS No. CA-2157

HABS  
CAL,  
19-LOSAN,  
63-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FRIDAY MORNING CLUB

HABS  
CAL  
19-LOSAN,  
63-  
HABS NO.  
CA-2157

1. Location: 938-940 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Ca. 9001
2. Present Owner: Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts
3. Present Occupant: Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts; Friday Morning Club
4. Present Use: Clubhouse
5. Significance: The Friday Morning Club was one of the more prominent women's organizations in the Los Angeles area. The building was constructed to accommodate the growing membership and increased needs of the organization.

It was founded in Los Angeles in April, 1891, by Caroline Seymour Severance. She had been the founder and first president of the New England Women's Club in Boston in 1868. Much of the civic and philanthropic work in the developing life of Los Angeles was done by women who were members of the Friday Morning Club. Activities of the Club and its members in its early years included:

- o The establishment of kindergartens in the city under the leadership of Mrs. Severance.
- o Founding of the first organized charities in Los Angeles under Mrs. D. G. Stevens, a member of the FMC from 1893 until her death at the age of 93.
- o Development of a Juvenile Court in Los Angeles, led by Mrs. Joseph Sartori, to whom the Club library is dedicated.

From the beginning, the Friday Morning Club, under the leadership of Mrs. Severance, was in the forefront of the battle for women's suffrage. The Club library contains correspondence between Mrs. Severance and Susan B. Anthony, dated 1900 and 1901. When suffrage was achieved in California in 1911, Mrs. Severance, at the age of 91, was honored by being the first woman to register in Los Angeles.

The Friday Morning Club still occupies the fifth floor of the building, having leased it back from the Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts. The Club still uses the large theater, the main dining room, and other meeting rooms for meetings, lectures, film showings and special occasions.

In 1977, the Club sold title to the building to the Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts. The Society has installed in the building many unique and extensive collections in the field of theater arts. They include the Tracy Keenan Wynn lithograph collection, and rare mint condition Strobridge theatrical "three sheet" lithographs dating from 1910-1912, on permanent loan from the University of Southern California Library. These lithographs are displayed in the Theater Roof Garden.

The Ed Wynn collection of photographs covers his entire career, and his posters are displayed in various rooms. His awards, correspondence, transcription of radio shows, 1949-1950 television programs, and unreleased film footage are also on file.

The Norman Carroll Circus Collection, on permanent loan from the Los Angeles Museum of Science and Industry, is on permanent display in the fourth floor lobby and lounge.

Milt Larsen's Earl Carroll Collection, with pictorial elements, is on display in the fourth floor lounge. Photos, programs, personal letters and files, and production scripts are in the SPVA Library. These include all of the scripts for the various editions of the Earl Carroll Vanities (1926-1932), and the Earl Carroll Sketchbook Revues from 1929-1948.

The Eddie Cantor Collection, including Cantor's personal files, scripts, unpublished manuscripts, and rare photos, tapes and acetate recordings of early Cantor radio shows and interviews are on file. Of particular interest is the Eddie Cantor gag file; this is his personal collection of thousands of gags under individual subject headings.

The Billy House Collection, including the comedian's own gag file, joke and humor books dating back to the first editions of Joe Miller and original copies of Madison's Budget and Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang are on file. The collection also contains many full scripts of lost musical comedies and original sketches by Billy House.

Personal memorabilia of George M. Cohan, Jimmy Durante, Ed Wynn and Burt Lahr are located in various rooms.

The SPVA Library is open as a research facility to any serious student of the theater, whether or not he is a member of the club, and is in daily use for that purpose.

The building is in active use by the Society for live plays, cabarets, meals, and revivals of early stage and radio dramas.

The original significance of the building lies in the development of women's activities in Los Angeles, charitable, cultural and political. With the transfer of ownership to the Society for the Preservation of the Variety Arts, the building continues to play an important role in the preservation of the entertainment arts, both in Los Angeles and as part of our national heritage.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: 1923 (City of Los Angeles building permits)

2. Architect: Allison and Allison

Allison and Allison - The firm of Allison and Allison designed a large number of significant structures throughout the Southwest, and in particular in Southern California.

The firm was responsible for supervising design plans for the University of California at Los Angeles. In addition to the Friday Morning Club and the Southern California Edison Company building, Allison and Allison designed the University Club, Shakespeare Club, and the Women's Athletic Club.

Senior member of this firm was David Clark Allison. Born in 1881, Allison was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and later studied at the Ecole Des Beaux Arts, Paris. Allison moved to Los Angeles in 1910 and immediately established a successful practice in architecture.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

1923      Owner at construction: The Friday Morning Club

1977      Deed No. 77-874001, recorded August 10, 1977  
Friday Morning Club to the Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts

4. Builder: Winter Construction Company

5. Original Plans and Construction: Not located

6. Alterations and Additions: There have been minor alterations to the facade, for example signing.
- B. Historical Context: Building a Clubhouse as large and elaborate as the Friday Morning Club was symbolic of the increasingly important role of women in the 1920's. Investment in the Clubhouse signified the institutionalization of women's efforts to influence local affairs, particularly in those areas traditionally considered the concern of women (e.g. children's education). The Friday Morning Club extended its interests beyond the purely traditional ones, e.g. juvenile courts and women's suffrage, but even those activities were carried on by women who were themselves playing very traditional roles in their private lives.

The construction of the Figueroa Hotel, directly across the street from the Friday Morning Club, in 1925, presents an interesting contrast with the Club. The Figueroa Hotel was built and run by women to meet the needs of business, professional and traveling women. The juxtaposition of the two is a microcosm of the increasingly important and complex roles women were playing in American society in the 1920's.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This structure is built in an H shaped plan, and is designed in a manner influenced by Italian Renaissance/Mediterranean architecture. The five story building is, with the exception of a seven story corner tower nearby, symmetrical.

The wall and window surface treatment is austere. The facade of the structure is virtually unaltered and the original architectural intent is clearly evident.

2. Condition of Fabric: Excellent

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all Dimensions: The structure is located on a lot of .381 acres.
2. Foundations: The foundations of the structure are of reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: The wall surface of the building consists of an entrance facade. All other wall surfaces are simple and undecorated. The walls are all of reinforced concrete construction. The entrance facade consists of a triple area entrance supported on columns. The lower three stories are rusticated with an austere concrete wall surface above.
4. Structural System, Framing: The building is of fire-proof construction with a steel truss roof on concrete columns.
5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads: The building has three balconies. One at the fourth floor level, one above the fourth floor level which is inset, and one above the sixth floor level.
6. Chimneys: none
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: The central entrance is carried out in a triple area design. The doorway is flat in configuration and is of wood construction. Additional doorways flank the central entrance.

- b. Windows and Shutters: Windows are detailed in both flat and arched configurations. A triple arched window surround is located in the center of the building facade. Windows are of small pane construction and are of both the sash and hinge type.

8. Roof:

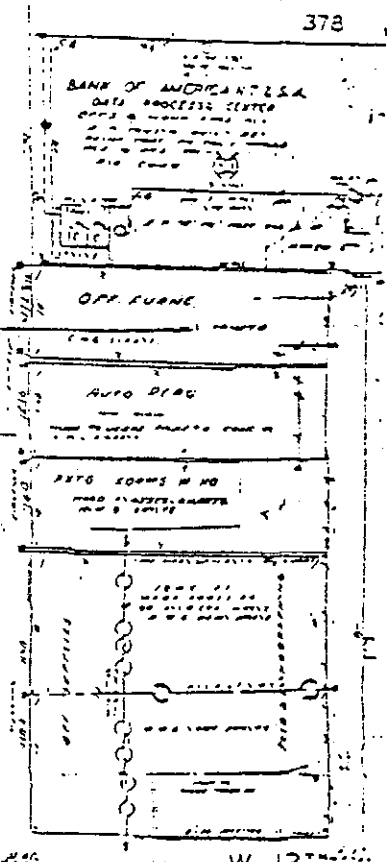
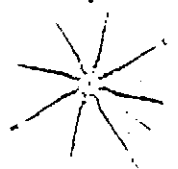
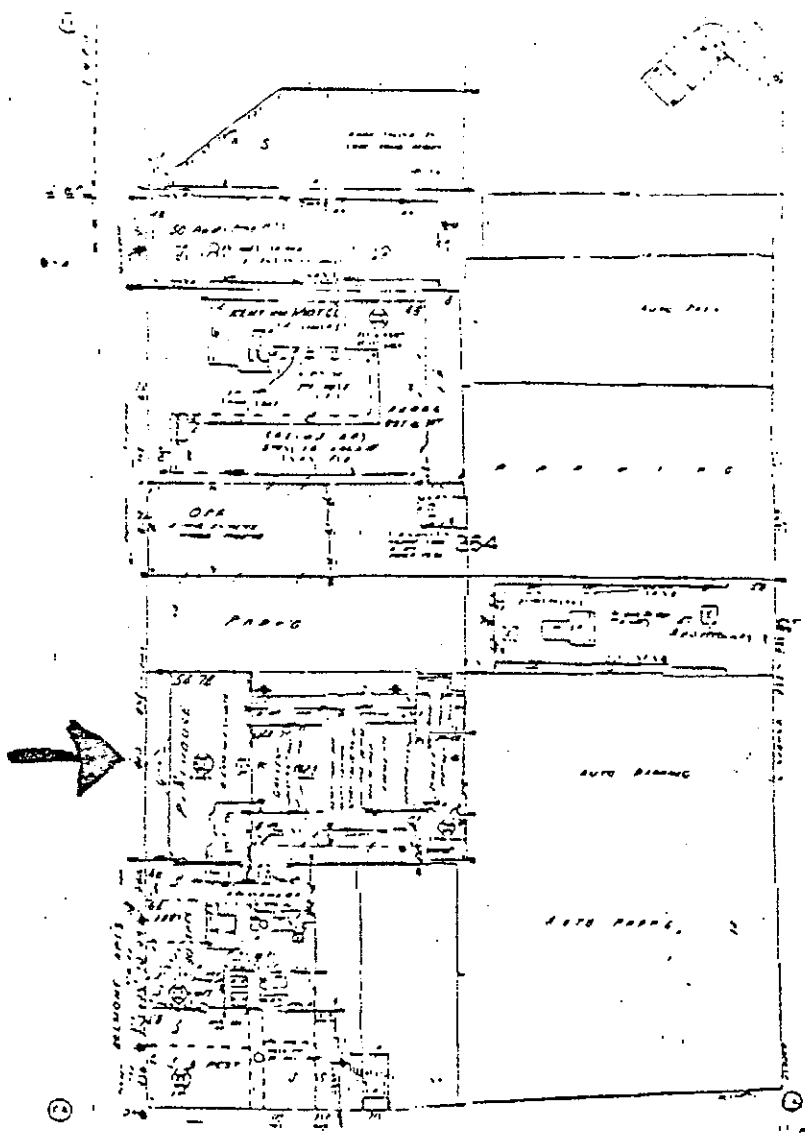
- a. Shape, Covering: The roof is carried out in a combined slant and flat configuration. The covering is both composite and tile.
- b. Cornice, Eaves: A simple bracketed cornice is carried across the facade at the roofline.
- c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers: A seven story tower is located at the northwest corner of the structure. It has a pyramidal roof.

- C. Description of the Interior: Since this submission refers only to exterior recordation of the structure, only a brief description of interior details is included.

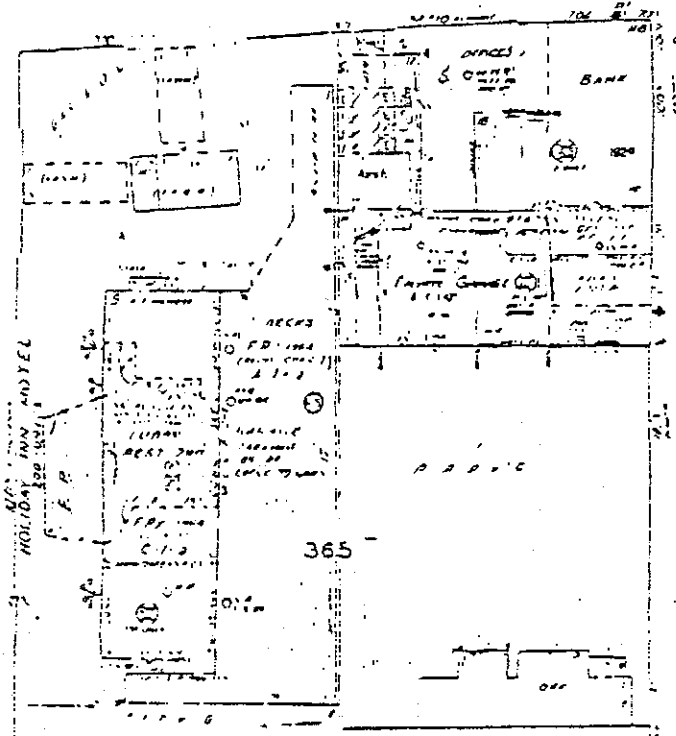
On the first floor of the interior, there is a large entrance lobby leading to the auditorium. Offices are located on the mezzanine. Club rooms are located on the second floor with a lounge and library. On the third floor there is a lecture hall. The fourth floor is taken over entirely by a large dining room.

D. Site:

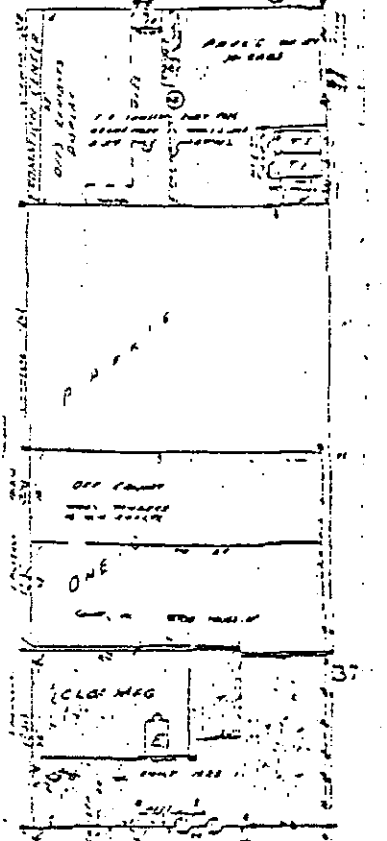
- 1. General Setting and Orientation: The building is oriented in a primarily east to west direction. The main entrance fronts on Figueroa Street and is entered from the west. The building is located in a densely built urban context, but is highlighted by its architectural design and detailing.
- 2. Historic Landscape Design: none
- 3. Outbuildings: none



S. FIGUEROA



S. FIGUEROA



PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, building permits

City of Los Angeles, Department of Planning, Land Use Planning and Management System

County of Los Angeles, Recorder's Office, Official Records of the County of Los Angeles

2. Secondary Sources:

Baists Real Estate Atlas of Los Angeles  
(G. W. Baist Co., Philadelphia, Pa.: 1905)

The Friday Morning Club Yearbook (Los Angeles) 1919, 1924

Hatheway, Roger G., "Historic Building Survey: Request for Determination of Eligibility"  
(Los Angeles Downtown People Mover Program: January, 1979)

Hill, Lawrence, La Reina, Los Angeles in 3 Centuries  
(Los Angeles: Security Trust & Savings Bank, 1929).

Los Angeles Evening Express Yearbook, 1926, p. 20.

Los Angeles Times, April 9, 1922, V, 1.

\_\_\_\_\_, April 4, 1971, E, 6.

Sanborn Map Company, Los Angeles Fire Insurance Maps  
(New York: 1883, 1927, 1958).

Southwest Builder and Contractor, January 26, 1923, p.57

\_\_\_\_\_, February 23, 1923, p.40

\_\_\_\_\_, March 2, 1923, p.40.

\_\_\_\_\_, March 30, 1923, p.40.

\_\_\_\_\_, February 20, 1925, p.45

Works Projects Administration, Los Angeles Drawings  
(Los Angeles, 1939).

Prepared by: Myra L. Frank,  
Senior Transportation Planner  
Roger G. Hatheway,  
Consulting Research  
Historian  
Los Angeles Downtown  
People Mover Authority  
October, 1980

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Los Angeles Downtown People Mover Project, supported by a demonstration grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, is proposing to build an automated, grade-separated transit system in downtown Los Angeles.

A portion of the route as proposed would run along the center of Figueroa Street, approximately 30 feet from the facade of the Friday Morning Club. Locating the DPM in the center of the street will not require any alterations to the structure, but will create a new visual element in front of the structure.